

A  
GATE  
OF  
CEDAR

KATHARINE  
MORSE



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A GATE OF CEDAR



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TORONTO

# A GATE OF CEDAR

BY

KATHARINE MORSE

Author of

"The Uncensored Letters of a Canteen Girl"



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1922

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THIS BOOK  
IS  
DEDICATED  
TO  
MY MOTHER



*The Shuamite* and *Verses for a Guest Room*  
appeared in the Century Magazine under  
the pen name “Anne Arrabin.”



## FOREWORD

I PIPE not to the world,  
For it were bold of me  
To think that such a one as I  
Could pipe for others' glee:

For some have pipes of gold  
And some of mellow brass;  
My pipe is but a hollow reed  
Bound with a blade of grass.

Some pipe to courts and kings,  
Some to the crowding mart;  
But I, I pipe not to the world,  
I pipe to my own heart.



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## A GATE OF CEDAR



## MAPLE TREE

Now fall mints gold from out the green of June;  
Golden as honey in the comb,  
Pagan and perfect as some temple dome  
My maple burns against the blue of noon.

Under its shining shade I lie and gaze  
Up through dark branches veining amber tints  
Over whose arch the gold light gleams and glints  
Lovely as lacquer, lucent as old glaze;

Till, lying so, I dream there drips  
Wine and wild honey on my lips.

## MY GARDEN

My garden is a harlequin,  
With careless colors tumbled in;  
And neither proper beds nor rows  
But every gipsy flower that grows;  
Larkspurs and blazing stars and phlox,  
Petunias and hollyhocks,  
And marigolds and feverfew  
And campions and four-o'clocks;  
Scarlets and blues and pinks and corals  
With every saucy scent and hue . . .  
And should you comment; Such a garden  
Is little suited, by your pardon,  
To our New England modes and morals,  
Pray tell me then the reason of it!  
I'll only say; The wild bees love it,  
And what the bees love, I love too.

## AUTUMNAL

RUST on the field and on the thicket,  
A cicada, a shrilling cricket,  
Wild apples from a hill-side bough  
With skin like flame and flesh like snow,  
With chestnuts brown and warm and sleek  
And shining as an Arab's cheek,  
Grapes garlanding a twisted vine,  
The sumachs ruddy as red wine,  
And under sharp October skies  
Your sunburnt smile, your gipsy eyes!

## BUMBLEBEE

IN a satin chamber  
I surprised a bee  
Tippling draughts of amber  
From cup of porphyry.

With buccaneer bravado  
The velvet debauché  
Booms blustering defiance,  
Then swaggers it away.

## COLORS

No color is so glad as green;—  
When the full flood of April shakes  
The world and each bud stirs and wakes  
Amid the woods where woodland lakes  
Shine bright as bluebells in between;  
Or when June quickens and the rye  
Lies tender-hearted to the sky,  
Or when the young maize shoulder-high  
Takes from the light a shifting sheen:

If God should say to me; Now choose  
Which hue to keep since you must lose  
All colors from the earth but one:

I'd say; Dear God, I would regret  
The hyacinth and violet,  
The cowslip brimmed with morning sun,  
The phantom rainbow and the mist  
At dawn of pearl and amethyst;  
And may I die ere I forget  
The blue of yonder hill-top,—yet  
God, give me green!

## AWAKENING

THE dawn is a kiss on my face . . .  
I throw wide the dark door of night,  
I leap to the day's embrace,  
I give myself to the light.

## THE SHRIVING

BENEATH a breaking sky  
Amid the wild grass, I  
Have shrived myself anew;  
Austere, immaculate, withdrawn,  
The Angel of the Dawn  
Has pierced my naked heart with light  
And sealed my brow with dew.

## ON THE HILL-TOP

FROM the cup of the sky  
With lips long starved  
I drink the blue dawn,  
Unafraid;  
While in my hands  
I hold the earth,—  
A sphere of green jade  
Curiously carved.

## A SUNSET

FISH  
Silver  
Luminous  
Lazily poised;  
Foam streaks  
Of far-off ships:

Tides  
Amber  
Fathomless;  
Dark waves  
Brooding of storm  
Eclipse.

## TWILIGHT

DUSK the grey reaper gathers in  
The golden harvest of the sky;  
Thin and more thin  
The failing color shows:  
Retarded in its flight  
As by a Titan's touch  
The rhythm of the light  
Perceptibly now slows:  
The old earth, tired and spent  
And having suffered much,  
Yet happily content,  
Turns with a drowsy sigh  
Its slow cheek to the night.

## IN THE ORCHARD

THERE are no hours more gold than these  
Beneath the autumn apple trees,  
When every laden twig and bough  
Is bright with fruit like colored flames:  
If I were but a poet now  
I'd make a sonnet of their names:

There's *Belle Fleur Jaune* and *Belle et Bonne*,  
*Wonder* and *Duke of Wellington*,  
*Arkansas Baptist* and *Louise*,  
*Victuals* and *Drink* and *Bread* and *Cheese*,  
With *Texas Pride*, *Kentucky Queen*  
And *Salome* and *Magdalene*,  
*Gloria Mundi*, *Gillyflower*  
With *Winter Wine* and *Sweet* and *Sour*.

Scarlet and gold I count each one  
From *Maiden's Blush* to *Jonathan*,  
And each is lovelier than the rest;  
I do not know which one is best.

## BIRDS

A BLUEBIRD in an apple tree  
A glad adventure is to me;

While, sudden glimpsed, the swallow's dart  
Like laughter flicks across my heart;

Grey-shadowed gulls with wide blown wings  
Wake in me vagrant hankerings;

A silver thrush at dusk of day  
Calls from dim woods and then I pray.

## HUMMING-BIRD

THE fashion of the humming-bird;—  
At soul blithe bee,  
Caught in a case of Cloisonné  
From oversea;

A little whiff of Orient  
In prim New England morn,  
To vex the heart with Araby  
And leave forlorn;

A vagrant note of scarlet joy  
That bell and book should ban,  
A bit of pagan pageantry  
To flout the puritan.

## THRASHER

THE thrasher in my aspen tree  
Has set his sleek brown throat a-bubble;  
The drollest scamp of lovers, he  
To court by code will take no trouble;  
He flouts his sweetheart while he woos,  
Cajoles, caresses, spites and teases,  
Then all at once croons, coaxes, coos;  
He plays with moods just as he pleases,  
A puckish, now a poignant, note,  
Some whimsy of a waggish wit,  
Then all Arcadia in his throat;  
I can but sense the drift of it,  
For mortal wits at best are thick  
When love's a-brewing,—more's the pity!  
But this is clear; Sweet, Sweet, come quick!  
Come merrily, my Pretty, Pretty!

## CROW

A GENTLEMAN, sedate, severe,  
In black habiliments monastic,  
Of sombre mien and speech austere,—  
To dub him robber were fantastic!

Indeed his solemn cawings say;  
Nine flies and five fat slugs each day  
Suffice for my ascetic diet:—  
What did I hear you mutter? Corn!  
I will not trouble to deny it!  
Such slanders best are met with scorn!

Pax tecum, friend, I must be flying;  
The hour grows late. What's that you say?  
The Blacksmith's old white mare is dying?  
The Deacon's early garden's sprouting?  
Thanks, I'll be going by that way;  
Caaa caw! We'll settle this past doubting.

## CHICKADEE

You wee grey gamin of a bird,  
Shy, daring, curious, alert,  
Pranking in antic airs absurd,—  
An arrant flirt!

Frequenter of our winter boughs  
In garb as staid as any Quaker,  
A bit of cricket and of mouse  
Went to your making, merry-maker!

You darting, starting little bobbin!  
Our snow-bound days it seems delight you,—  
More venturesome than wren or robin,—  
Bless you, you saucy little sprite, you!

## THE OAK TREE

WITH the wind I awoke  
In the night,  
Lying huddled and warm  
Harkening to the storm;  
Sudden I sat upright,  
Beat on the dark with a cry,  
Knowing that you my own

Mighty and steadfast oak  
Were fallen, were overthrown. . . .  
Now in the dark I lie  
Watching the altered day  
Dawn in an empty sky.

## A BEE SETS SAIL

THE wind blows east, the wind blows storm,  
And yet this very hour  
I saw a bumblebee embark  
In frigate of a flower;

An admiral in epaulets,  
He strode the scented deck  
And in the teeth of tossing gales  
He rode without a wreck.

More valorous adventurer  
I never hope to see,—  
Though mariners be gallant men,—  
Than that same bumblebee.

## THE SUMACHS

### Fall

WIDE-flocking birds of scarlet flame  
In Orient imaginings  
Which yet no cage could hold or tame . . .  
I do not dare draw near  
Lest there should suddenly arise  
A blinding tumult of great wings  
Whirled upward with strange tropic cries.

## THE SUMACHS

### Winter

GREY with the cold  
They shiver bare and stark,  
Yet holding each aloft  
Insistently, defying,  
A crimson torch  
Wherof the spark  
Is dying.

## FOG

Berkeley

THE wings of the fog have brushed the barren  
hill-tops,—

White wings poised and hovering on high!—  
Swift wings soar and sweep across the heavens.  
The wings of the fog have blotted out the sky!

The wings of the fog are brooding close above  
us,—

White, white, white like a great flag unfurled!—  
The wings of the fog have filled the air with blind-  
ness,

The wings of the fog have covered all the world!

## BLITHE BIRD BOLD BEE

BLITHE bird, bold bee  
Be tolerant of me;  
Flit near  
Blue Chevalier  
Of beechwood tree.

Swift dragon-fly,  
No alien I!  
Mine host,  
Almost,  
In inns of sky.

Thrush, robin, wren,  
Greet ye again!  
Brave company!  
To me  
My countrymen.

## WINTER IN THE SOUTH

THE north land, the home land,  
Ah God! If I were there!  
Just to see the pointed pines  
And steepled cedars growing . . .  
A cold air and a keen air  
And the snow  
Blowing.



## OUT OF THE PAST

*Rhymes Written Concerning  
Certain Personages and Events  
in New England History*



## THE REGICIDE

DEEP are God's ways, passing man's little wit,  
His wisdom as His grace is infinite:  
His will be done; though by His will I live  
Exiled, an outcast and a fugitive,  
Destined through all my wanderings to spread  
Danger like pestilence, to eat the bread  
Of charity in secret, yea almost  
Living among the living like a ghost,  
Shut from the good green earth, shut from the  
sky,  
A dweller in dark rooms, until I die.

His will be done! Have I not done His will?  
*Vengeance is mine*, He saith; *Thou shalt not kill*.  
Yet for the sake of England,—England's fate  
Hung in the balance while the seed of hate  
Sprang to red war and he who wrought it so,  
Tyrant and traitor, murderer and foe  
Of England's weal, faithless and false, a thing  
More like a wanton woman than a king,

Ruled in a bitter and a cruel reign  
And lied and swore and broke his oaths again.

And so I judged him, yea and put my name  
On the death warrant, witnessing the same. . . .  
The great axe cleft the air, the false head fell . . .  
England! O proud land loved and served too well!  
What dooms great hearts have undergone for her!  
Yet fond and fickle, foolish like the cur  
Returning to his vomit, purged in vain,  
She bows beneath the tyrant's yoke again!

So God disposes of what man has planned;  
The shadows shift and lengthen and the sand  
Runs from the hour-glass. We are doomed and  
driven,  
Vessels without a compass. I have given  
All for this one small bitter boon of life . . .  
And thou, brave heart, O well-belovéd wife,  
A friendless wilderness, a savage sea  
Cry dumb denial betwixt thee and me!  
Day follows day, so age creeps on apace,  
And I shall die and never see her face . . .

Never to see her face nor England's shore,  
Green as the garden of the Lord, once more,—  
England and all life's stately ordered ways,  
England and all the splendor of past days!  
But for me rather endless exile spent  
In hiding on an uncouth continent,  
Until my days, like dark birds that have flown,  
Are told and I die nameless and alone.

Lord, who hast deigned, to compass Thy intent,  
To make of me an humble instrument,  
Be merciful to me a sinner and instil  
Thy peace within my heart; have I not done Thy  
will?

## THE WITCH

So please your Worship, I'm not doing any harm!  
An old lame dame, her basket on her arm,  
Hobbling along the rutted road by hitches,  
Hunting for herbs beside the weedy ditches.  
Spells, did you say? God's mercy! my poor jaws  
Are fit for nothing but an old wife's saws.  
You heard me mutter? Aye! some foolish words  
Between me and my gossips here, the birds,—  
Wee saucy merry rascals, cock and hen!  
He roves abroad,—a way with gentlemen!—  
She sits at home, snug in the thorn-tree boughs,  
And plays the prude and keeps his little house.

Who's coming yon? Eh! who but Parson Jones!  
May the flesh rot from off his marrow bones!  
“Doddering old scald crazy crone,” he said.  
Eh well! Eh well! Some night he'll lie abed  
’Twixt dark and cockcrow feeling fifty pins  
Pricking his lean hide and his scrawny shins.  
Then there's that Goody Boltwood and her brat,  
She did me spite, the slut! She'll pay for that!

Eh hey! Perhaps I know a thing or two  
Some folks would give a-plenty if they knew!  
And my old rheumy eyes have seen some sights!  
What would you say, along o' moonshine nights  
When proper folk are snoring sound to see,  
Down in the Black Swamp by the willow tree,  
The devil, fiddle under chin,  
Fiddling away as gay as sin  
In a high cocked hat and scarlet hose;  
While seventeen imps with thumbs to nose  
Go spinning, kicking heels and toes  
Till one's that giddy goodness knows!

What's that you say? A witch? Now Heaven  
forfend!

I'm a poor woman, sir, that's near her end,  
And an old tongue does sometimes play queer  
tricks.

Eh! Give a dog a bad name and it sticks.

## DAN KELLOG ENTERTAINS SHAY'S ARMY

WE'RE Shay's men, fighting men, and we want  
rum;  
We're dry, dry as cinders and we'll drink till  
Kingdom come;  
Shutesbury and Petersham, Pelham Hill and  
Hollow,  
We're ranting roaring rebels, sir! and Shay's the  
man we follow!

*Here Tom Conkey sings solus*  
*Old man Kellog was a toper and a Tory,*  
*He swore by the crown and he lived on gin and*  
*glory,*  
*He drank to the King and he blessed his soul;*  
*They came to tar and feather him, he hid him in*  
*a hole;*  
*He took his boots and Bible and went to win the*  
*war;*  
*Up with your bumpers boys and toast our host*  
*once more!*

DAN KELLOG ENTERTAINS SHAY'S ARMY 49

Long-legged stiff-necked lean pumkin-heads,  
There's neither man nor devil, sir! that any of us  
dreads!

Rough ready roisterers hailing from the hills,  
Every musket has its ball every bullet kills;  
We're sick of courts and lawyermen and laws and  
all such bunk,

And some of us are sober but most of us are  
drunk:

We've had one revolution and we've only just  
begun,

We've had one revolution,—s'blood, we'll have  
another one!

For we're Shay's men, fighting men, full of rum  
and sin,

We'll lick the whole damn continent and drink  
up all the gin;

Shutesbury and Petersham, Pelham Hill and  
Hollow,

Up with your bumpers, boys! Shay's the man to  
follow!

## STEPHEN BURROUGHS DEFENDS HIMSELF

AGAINST ALL SLANDERERS, TRADUCERS AND  
MALICIOUS TONGUES

*Alias Davis . . . rascal . . . ripe for hell . . .  
The noted Stephen Burroughs . . . preacher,—  
Well?*

*Scalawag, schoolmaster, vagabond of sorts,  
Pilloried, whipped, fined in a dozen courts,  
Old Parson Burroughs' son and life-long grief,  
Jail-bird, imposter, counterfeiter, thief!  
Without defender and without a friend,  
Foredoomed to hang! Sirs, have you made an  
end?*

Such titles so unsparingly conferred  
Disprove themselves. Admitting I have erred,  
Which of you, gentlemen, dare cast a stone?  
To err is human, have I erred alone?

To itemize the charge . . . that coining scheme . . .  
*I was the dupe, betrayed by that old dream*

Of turning dross to gold,—a luckless quest  
Which history assures us has obsessed  
The minds of wise men since King Solomon,—  
Helvetius, Sendevogius, Pope John;  
And where such worthy precedents exist  
Proving the status of the alchemist,  
Is it so strange that, guileless of deceit,  
I fell the victim of a cunning cheat?

Touching the matter of those sermons now,—  
A trifling matter, faith! for such a row!  
Whether myself had written them or not,  
They had their brimstone served them just as hot!  
Mean-minded busybones, they got their dues!  
Thinking to trap me with their text; “Old shoes  
And clouted on their feet.” Ill-doomed intent!  
I preached their sermon! Waxing eloquent,  
I proved *they* were the wearers of the shoes, the  
clouts  
Were envies, jealousies, suspicions, doubts;  
With such sleek sophistries as parsons use,  
Leaving them dumb, condemned by their own  
shoes!

52 STEPHEN BURROUGHS DEFENDS HIMSELF

Jail-bird? In sooth! And yet who needs be taught  
Five greater rogues go free for each wretch  
caught?

Judges are blind, the law is halt and lame,  
Lawyers are lies and justice but a name?  
Again, if you should urge that I perchance  
Have strayed in paths of sinful dalliance;  
What heart so cold but knows the charms of love,  
As witness,—Caesar, Alexander, Jove!

Time passes, sirs, when all is done and said,  
We live, we sin, we suffer, we are dead;  
And just to prove I don't do things by half,  
See, I have written my own epitaph;  
Stephen etcetera, student of arts,  
A mind of talent and a man of parts,  
Slandered, maligned, misrepresented,  
One who has erred yet much repented,  
A gentleman, a scholar and a wit . . .  
Too long, you say? Then just write:—counter-  
feit!

## THE PRIVATEERS

SLOOP from Magadore with ebony and gum,  
Schooner from San Salvadore loaded down with  
rum,

Merchantman from Africa with ivory and gold,—  
Ho! she'll bring a pretty price when her cargo's  
sold!

Blow us south to Rio Grande, blow us east to  
Spain,

Blow us north to Newfoundland and blow us  
back again.

Here's a buss for Peg and Meg and Moll, the  
pretty dears,

Every lass in every port who loves the privateers!

Schooner from the Indies with silks to dress a  
queen,

Lumber boat with beaver skins bound for Aber-  
deen,

Barque from Demerara with indigo and dyes,  
Malaga and Trinidad to make a Yankee prize.

*Run the colors up the mast, warn her with a shot,  
By the Lord, she's British, boys, give it to her hot!  
Half the game is Yankee aim, half is Yankee luck;  
Round shot, grape shot,—Glory ho! She's struck!*

Ho! Blow us south to Rio Grande, blow us east  
to Spain,  
Blow us north to Newfoundland and blow us  
back again!  
Here's a buss for Nell and Belle and Poll the  
pretty dear,  
Where's the lass in any port but loves a privateer?

## THE PIONEER'S THOUGHTS TURN EAST

ON the far hill-side in the spring  
I drove the grey team harrowing,  
When like a cry within my breast  
A word thrilled through me;—*west, west, west!*  
It rang and rang and would not still  
Though I would plough, though I would till,  
To whatsoever task I turned  
That thought still bit in me and burned . . .

Ah God! my little hill-side farm  
Green pastured in the east,  
Low roofed with long sheds sheltered warm,  
Smooth fare for man and beast;  
At dusk I see within my mind  
Just how the long light falls  
On the low-mounded hills behind  
And on the old stone walls . . .

And I who put this back of me  
Must watch strange seasons bring  
Their arid fruits, and friendless see  
The alien face of spring.

## GETTYSBURG

How can I bear it? Well the question's fair,  
Yet life must answer it, I sometimes think  
That God himself can't know what women bear.  
Reach me that skein of wool, Dear. No, the pink;  
The rose against the purple makes it rich;  
And still we go on sewing, stitch by stitch,  
While summer ripens with a scent of box  
Along the borders belled with hollyhocks,  
The fledglings from the eaves will soon be  
    flown,—  
And still God lets this wicked war go on!

You never saw my sons, you say? That's true,  
You didn't come to town till sixty-two . . .  
John is the elder one, the younger, Paul,  
Is dark and slight while John is fair and tall,  
Grey-eyed, with hair the color of ripe corn;  
I was just turned nineteen when John was born.

Paul was an ailing child, I used to fear  
Each spring he wouldn't see another year;

But John was strong and hearty. So they grew,  
And they were all the world to me,—these two!  
Then Andrew died, the fall of forty-seven;  
John was thirteen, Paul going on eleven,—  
Two little heedless happy lads, half-grown,—  
And I was left to care for them alone.

Only a mother knows with what heartache  
From dark to dawn a mother lies awake.  
John was a comfort, to be counted on,—  
No woman ever had a better son!  
But Paul was contrary and proud and wild  
And passionate and wilful from a child,  
With eyes that flashed and hair just like a girl's,  
Silky and thick and soft,—I kept those curls!  
Always the two of them were falling out,  
I don't know what their quarrels were about,  
Only if John liked red then Paul liked blue;—  
And yet they loved each other. . . . So they  
grew  
From boys to men and I began to fear  
The day when they would find some other woman  
dear.  
John played the friend, was kind but never cared;

I was his only sweetheart, he declared,  
And he would never have another one, but all  
The pretty girls were making eyes at Paul.

Then the war threatened . . . broke. . . . Night  
after night  
They argued; North and South and wrong and  
right,—  
I think Paul took the South's side out of spite.

Well that's my story; you may guess yourself  
What happened after; on the mantel shelf  
There, side by side, stand pictures of my two;  
Paul is the one in grey while John wears blue.

See! it is almost finished, just this row  
And then the corner. Women sew and sew  
And talk of trifles; why the hens don't lay  
And when the drought will break. The papers say  
That a great battle has been fought  
At Gettysburg. Oh, we are tamed and taught  
To live by little things from day to day.

A letter? . . . With bad news, you say . . . Be quick!

Tell me the worst! My boys are wounded? . . . sick?

Not dead! . . . Not he! . . . Not Paul, my little son!

Oh Christ! If it had only been the other one!



FOR ANY LOVER



## PRELUDE

SPRING like a white flame has swept o'er  
The hearts of lovers;  
They that loved before  
Are new enkindled as from hazel covers,  
Delirious, the floods of love-song pour.

And those that knew not love? Ah! they  
Are pitiful indeed!  
For none may say  
What measure of dim longing is their meed,  
Faint troublous tenderness and thoughts astray.

They see the glad leaf leaping from the seed,  
Yet feel no stir:  
The rune they cannot read;  
They sense the young sap surge through pine and  
fir,  
Yet know not what they need:

But, piteous in wistful wondering,  
Till, sudden-wise,  
They turn and kiss and cling;  
Then look upon the world with altered eyes  
And,—startled,—know the meaning of the spring.

## THE DREAMER

AH! dreams, dreams, dreams,  
Ye are the heart of me!  
The white ships melt in the mistland  
At the shadowy verge of the sea,  
And where they go I do not know  
Nor what their names may be;  
Ah! dreams, dreams, dreams,  
Ye are the heart of me!

## PREMONITION

I DREW the curtains of my heart,  
I closed the shutters tight;  
Then searched and stopped each cranny  
In dread of that great light  
Which should assault its casements;  
Then, safe from sharpest ray,  
Defied in stricken darkness  
The miracle of day!

## HE TROUBLES ME

He troubles me; I cannot sleep;  
While dark of night fades into dim  
I can do naught but wake and weep  
Because of him, because of him.

He troubles me; I cannot smile,  
For when I would mine eyelids swim  
And all the world goes dark a while  
Because of him, because of him.

He troubles me; I cannot pray;  
I fear the jealous seraphim  
That guard my dreams are flown away  
Because of him, because of him.

## LOVE'S ADVENT

I THOUGHT to hear high silver trumpets blown  
Across the world to warn me Love drew near  
And thrill my heart with rapture and with fear;  
So harkening, heedless of One long known,  
Till on a day I woke to find him grown  
Close to my heart, inestimably dear;  
Then when I thought Love's voice at last to hear  
Just with a look he claimed me for his own.

## LOVE'S DAWN

I WAS not unaware . . .  
For tears had touched my eyelids while I slept;  
I woke and found them wet upon my hair,—  
I knew it was for no light thing I wept.

I rose and clad me in my whitest gown,  
Through the hushed hallways silently I crept,  
And still the strange slow tears fell softly down;  
Still must I weep yet knew not why I wept.

I turned the blind key in the creaking lock,  
I drew the door wide with a shaken hand,  
I had not heard his step nor known his knock,  
Yet on the threshold I beheld him stand:

Beneath the shadow of his wings I knelt,  
He took my hands within his own and drew  
My breast against his bosom, straight I felt  
His tears against my cheek and then I knew.

## THE SHADOW

I COULD not stay to bind my hair,  
I could not stop to smooth my dress;  
There was no moment to prepare  
So sudden was the blessedness.

This thought struck sharp through all the sweet ;  
The stains upon my garment's hem,  
The dust upon my toil-worn feet,  
Alas ! what will he think of them ?

Oh Love, my Love, I grieve with shame,  
My heart is shaken with distress,  
I am so bitterly to blame  
For this ;—my life's unreadiness !

He smiled and spoke ; “Thy garment’s hem  
Shines as if woven star on star;  
Thy feet”—he knelt for kissing them—  
“Are whiter than a seraph’s are.”

## I DARE NOT TELL

I DARE not tell my love for thee aloud,  
So worship thee in dumbness, O Most Dear!  
For deep within my thought there wears a fear;—  
That I in speaking love should spin its shroud.

Yet when my shaken fingers brush thy hand  
Or when my thrilled lips tremble on thy cheek,—  
This wounding wonder that I may not speak,—  
Heart of my Hope, wilt thou not understand?

## THE TRYST

LAST night I held a tryst  
With my Old Self who died  
Three days ago. I drew her close and kissed  
Her wistful lips, whereat she, wonder-eyed  
And shaken; *Who art thou?*  
Dost know me not, O sister mine?  
*Nay, thou canst be no kin to me!*  
Lean nearer, look; dost know me now?  
*Aye, but—how strange! Your hands . . . they  
shine!*  
They shine for they have lain in his.  
*What makes that light about your brow?*  
A kiss.  
*Ah! I have dreamed,—I know!  
But not that it would be like this!*

## FOR THEE

FOR thee my soul puts on her morning face  
And festal robes; then through her dwelling-place  
Hastens, the quick breath panting to her lips,  
And,—prodigal!—lights all her tallow dips  
Until the dim abode is starred with light  
And all who pass may know; the King comes here  
tonight!

## NOW YOU ARE SLEEPING

Now you are sleeping I'd send my heart to you  
With laden fingers, phantom-light, to strew  
Blossoms of balm across your bitter breast;  
And on your brow bruised petals wet with dew  
And on your anguished eyelids herbs of rest.

## AFFIRMATION

DEAF, I would no less tremble to your voice;  
Blind and a dweller in strange lands,  
There still would surge through me sharp singing  
    joys  
At touch of your strong hands :

Dumb, I would answer to your word of love;  
Dead and forgotten underneath the sod,  
If you set foot upon the turf above  
Your step to me would be the step of God.

## THE SHULAMITE

*I am black . . . But comely! . . . O ye daughters  
of Jerusalem,  
As the tents of Kedar! . . . As the curtains of  
Solomon!*

### *The Song of Songs*

From out the misted margent of dead years  
I saw a masque of regal women move,  
And some were pale, some passionate with tears,  
While others smiled; these were the Queens of  
Love.

Out of the mists they moved in stately wise,—  
Purple and gold upon each garment's hem,—  
And looked at me aloof with alien eyes  
Who let them go and spoke no word with them:  
So passed, till suddenly I was aware  
Of one who moved among the sandaled throng  
Barefoot, a wreath of grape bloom in her hair,  
And lips that seemed to tremble with stilled song;  
On her young limbs a golden hue of sun

That pallid made appear the beauties white,—  
Fairer than all the Queens of Solomon!—  
Who art thou Loveliest? The Shulamite.

The cinctured Queens in silent scorn depart.  
*Tarry Belovéd, we are one at heart!*

## KISS ME

Kiss me as if you were afraid  
That what you craved might be gainsaid,  
As if, quite recklessly, you tried  
At venture, fearful lest denied,  
And thus but gained a moment's bliss  
At peril of displeasure,—kiss!

Kiss me as if you knew not yet  
How wholly I am yours; forget  
For just one moment that you know  
Both heart and soul are yours; ah! so  
As if you scarce dared dream that this  
Were possible to happen,—kiss!

Kiss me as if you were not sure  
This love of mine would long endure,  
As if you deemed that all delay  
Were dangerous to loving, yea,  
As if you did not dare to miss  
One moment while love lasted,—kiss!

## THE NEW MOON

### Slavic Love Song

ROUND is your rim, O moon, like the curve of my  
bosom,  
Yet are you pointed and sharp like a blade of fine  
metal ;  
I will stretch out my hand and take you and slip  
you beneath my bodice,  
When my lover embraces me, between my breasts  
he will feel your coldness ;  
And should he disdain me, with you I will pierce  
his heart.

## FANCY'S GARDEN

HOLLYHOCK;  
Sixteen, a muslin frock,  
Petticoats, pinafore,  
Sewing a seam;  
Sun at the cottage door,—  
Does she smile, does she dream?  
Heigh-ho, it's four o'clock,  
Come skim the cream!

Marigold;  
Tropic eyes black and bold,  
Earings of yellow brass;  
What will my fortune be,  
Gipsy lass, gipsy lass?  
Beauty, brave lovers three,  
A grave by the cypress tree . . .  
The coin falls to the grass . . .

Trumpet vine;  
Banners fly bright as wine,  
Crimson the bugles blare,

Red beat the throbbing drums,  
All the folk run and stare;  
Heart, heart, be wise, beware!  
Why should he care?

Mignonette;  
Dear, leave me not as yet!  
Love me in gentle mood,  
Love me in solitude:  
Draw close the curtain's fold,  
Shut out the careless street;  
Will love grow ever cold?  
Love is so sweet!

Columbine;  
Scarlet lips mocking mine,  
Scarlet skirts all a-blow;  
Where's my love Pierrot?  
Once he loved Pierrette,  
Now she's grown thin . . .  
Ah, how these men forget!  
*Harlequin . . . Harlequin!*

Passion Flower;  
Cloisters, a shadowed hour,  
A nun in a purple hood;  
Why must she pray so long  
When she is so good?  
Prayers for true lovers dead,  
Prayers for those soon to be,—  
Saint, when your prayers are said,  
Say one for me!

## THE FEAR

MAKE me, Most Dear, to love you less,  
Lest I should lean on you and twine  
Myself too close until you be  
Burdened by love's sweet helplessness  
Like the ill-starred though sturdy tree  
Weighted by the slow strangling vine.

So spare your kiss, forego your touch,  
Draw your deep lips away from mine :  
For I have learned what wisdom saith ;  
He whom a woman loves too much  
Drinks as it were a drowsy wine  
And in the lees of it lurks death.

## THE MIRROR

Look!—in the looking-glass we two  
Mirrored a moment, I and you,  
Dark head and fair, grey eyes and blue;

We kiss, they clasp. Tonight we go  
You east, I west, and who can know  
When you will once more hold me so?

Yet since our mirrored selves have kissed  
Will not these shadow shapes persist,  
Ghost lovers in a timeless tryst?

## THE WANDERER

IN the early dawn of a morning grey  
He took his staff and departed;  
He would not bide though I bid him stay  
And he carolled a song as he started.

I watched him go from the courtyard gate,—  
Leaden the skies hung o'er him!—  
Down the path where we'd walked of late,  
Till the world spread wide before him.

He carries my heart in the scrip at his side!  
My love is the flower in his bonnet,  
And his leathern coat,—Ah woe betide!—  
Is warm with my kisses on it.

He is bearing the dreams of my soul at his belt  
And my prayers within his grey wallet  
And all the joy that I've ever felt,—  
God knows what may chance to befall it!

He has left me of his but a ragged glove,  
So old and worn that he tossed it  
Down by the gate;—did you dream, my Love,  
What an alms you gave when you lost it?

He has left me naught of mine own but tears  
And the hope that I fain would cherish;  
The first, I trow, will last me for years,  
But alas! if the hope should perish!

## HIS LETTERS

I WOULD be free of love that gyves and grieves  
So I will burn his letters one by one,  
For though these sheets be light as wintered leaves  
Yet burden they the heart they lie upon.

His letters, one by one, have fled in flame,  
In ashes lie the burning words he writ,  
All, save for this last little sheet,—ah shame!  
Although I would, I cannot part with it!

## HEIGH-HO

HEIGH-HO!

When did love go?

Ask me not, I do not know;—

Last night, today, a week ago!

Who saw him die?

And did he smile or did he sigh?

A tear, a laugh, an epitaph. . . .

Who will his mourner be?

Not I!

## LOVE'S GRAVE

DIG me a grave for last year's love,  
Bury him dark and deep,  
So with the green o' the grass above,  
Last year's love may sleep.

At his head and his feet I will plant a red rose,  
With harebells and violets blue,—  
Everything fragrant and fragile that grows;  
But over his bosom,—rue.

## HUMORESQUE

HEART, heart, O wherefor so threadbare?  
Are there not gems and golden gauds to wear,  
And many merry dominoes fit for a carnival,  
And scores of silk and satin gowns all hanging  
on the wall?

Heart, heart, why goest so forlorn?  
Put by your robes of penitence, your grey cloak  
dim and worn,  
Put on some golden vanity with rosy ribbands  
gay,  
And then pretend it's festival and play at holiday!

## THE RAIN

THE phantom fingers of the rain  
Are tapping at my window-pane,  
And in the dripping from the leaves,  
The running murmur in the eaves,  
A whisper sounds; Do you remember  
That windy wild day in November,  
You two together in the mist  
And how he drew you close and kissed?  
O wraith hands at my window sill,  
O wistful phantom hands, be still!  
His cheek against mine warm and wet,  
The mist, the kiss . . . could I forget?

## RENUNCIATION

I AM aweary, droop thy mantle, Sweet;  
Let fall its folds about me for a space,  
Bowing thy head, that I who clasp thy feet  
May once more touch thy face.

Strong arms that fain would hold me high  
Against the world, close me in last caress;  
I could not match thy stature,—no, not I!  
See, I have striven and won weariness!

O bright brave head! O high and lordly Love!  
All can I bear except to see thee low;  
Stay not for pity,—I am well enough—  
Bend once above me, kiss me and then go.

FOR ANYONE



## TRYPTICH IN ASH AND EBONY

### LEFT PANEL

#### THREE CENTURIONS

What have we here today?

A brace of thieves.

In Rome they keep such punishments for slaves.  
Freemen or bondsmen all these Jews are knaves.  
The third? A crazed fanatic who believes  
In some new sect, no one knows what or why.  
New Gods are born as fast as old Gods die,  
And who can tell the false God from the true?  
I saw strange things in the Numidian war.  
No God is worth a strong man's dying for!  
He came to save the world, so Sextus said.  
The world will save itself when he is dead.  
And so it will, my friend, when I and you  
Like him have died and been forgotten too.

## RIGHT PANEL

### A GROUP OF SOLDIERS

Give me the coat.

It's mine.

You thief, you lie!

Take it then if you dare!

I had it first.

The greedy vulture plucks men as they die.

You and your vultures, dirty dog, be cursed!

Peace to your quarrel, brawlers, give it here;

Verrus, your knife, we'll cut the cloth in two.

You'll spoil a rare fine bit of weaving if you do!

Leave it to luck then; let the dice decide.

What was that noise?

A woman standing near

Reached through the press and touched the coat  
and cried.

Plague take the women! What do they want here?

Back! Give us space.

Ho! Quintus is cross-eyed,

Watch how he squints.

He's muttering a charm.  
Look out for Caius, he has crooked dice!  
Speak for yourself!

Mercury, jog his arm!  
Room for my elbow! Back, you beggar's lice!

## CENTRAL PANEL

### THE TWO THIEVES

BROTHER, why dost thou hang so high?  
The moon was darkened in the sky  
And he was rich and very old,  
An old bald miser hard as hate,  
What use had he for all that gold?  
Cursed be the Romans and their law!  
I robbed the coffer, gained the gate,—  
The sleeping slaves lay close about,—  
And suddenly the moon came out  
And the watch saw.

And I,—  
At the end of the night on the Joppa road  
I slit his throat  
And so he died;  
I wouldn't have killed him but he cried,—  
A sickly beggar full of sores  
With a few coins in his begging bowl;  
I hid his body in a hole,

They tracked me by my bloody coat:  
Curse them, these Roman sons of whores!

And what of him who makes the third,  
Who hangs and does not speak a word?

Hast thou not heard?  
It is the son of Joseph, he  
Men call the Christ.

Ho! Jesus, be  
Thou Christ or Prophet, speak and loose  
These nails that pierce us, set us free!  
Or has thy God forsaken thee?  
Curse thee, thou saviour of the Jews!

## A ROOM

### THE ROSEWOOD CABINET

CRYSTALS for scent, silver for snuff and patches,  
Carnelian, lacquer, ivory and gilt,  
A brooch of filagree, a clasp that matches,  
A crucifix, a fan, a dagger's hilt;—  
These, treasured once by buried beaux and belles  
Of antique elegance, what are they more  
Than driftwood, shining pebbles and strange  
shells  
Left by the Past's spent tide along Time's shore?

## A JAPANESE PRINT

A DRAGONFLY

Alighting;

A thin blade of sedge;

Three grey green stalks

Cut by the paper's edge . . .

Straws, meadow grass,

Insects . . .

Why should we lack for art

With such

As texts?

## SPINET

In you frail melodies exist  
Like fine rain falling from a mist,—  
Imagined fantasies persist.

So your quaint cadences designed  
In antique patterns haunt the mind  
Like phantoms fugitive as wind.

## THE HORSEHAIR SOFA

FOR fleshly penitence devised,  
New England's conscience symbolised,  
The Ten Commandments on a platter,—  
Pantalettes, prayer-books, prunes and prisms,  
Longer and shorter Catechisms,—  
Morals triumphant over matter!

## THE PORTRAIT

So you're the stock from which our race derives,—  
You and your three prim unprotesting wives;  
Painted by Stuart, A. D. eighteen-two,  
He knew the breed and so he painted you.

Well sir, it's plain to see you liked old sherry  
And wagged a warm tongue when the hour grew  
merry,

Yet, duly decorous, performed your duty  
Toward God, and—kept a keen eye out for female  
beauty.

So passed a long life spent in honest labour  
Getting the better of your crafty neighbour.

As to religion, staunchly orthodox,  
Taking no chances on hell fire,—sly fox!  
In seventy-five you swore yourself a Tory,  
In seventy-six, ah, that's another story!  
Finding the King's cause isn't worth a groat,  
You trim your sails and turn your Tory coat.

By eighteen-twelve you were as firm and fiery  
As any patriot. You kept a diary  
In which we find recorded acts and attitudes,  
Politics, petty plots and pious platitudes.

Four score and ten you died in twenty-seven,  
Mourned by six sons;—such are the saints in  
Heaven!

## THE LITTLE DANCER

### I

O LIGHT my feet and light my fancies,  
And light as fleet my flitting dances;  
I could not sink were worlds to drown:  
Come, wind, and take me!  
I am thistledown.

### II

To each  
I speak in different speech,  
I give a different gift . . .  
To some magic and mysteries,  
To one a white moth's kiss,  
To others rainbows, dew;  
What shall I give to you?

### III

Dance with me O lover of mine  
And I'll give you a kiss in a cup of wine,  
A golden bow and a silver dart  
And wild wings to nest within your heart.

## IV

What would you have me be?  
A dryad who has left her home  
In some wind-wakened aspen tree?  
A sea-sprite laughing from the foam?  
A far cloud drifting in the sky?  
A bird alighting on a bough?  
A flower, a bee, a dragonfly?  
What would you have me now?

## V

I wonder if you guessed  
Where I was dancing, just a breath ago . . .  
Where? Why on heaven's roof,  
Across a velvet carpet, warp and woof  
Woven of shining strands of azure air;  
Against my breast  
The wind blew sharp as scimitars  
And all about my feet  
Like shining petals  
Lay lost stars.

## VI

Wind of the sky!  
Leap down your sunlit stairs  
Bright with wild winey airs,  
Suddenly, unawares,  
Lift me and bear me high!

Wind of the sea;  
Fathoms of foam and thunder,  
Dirge of the dim sea-wonder  
Hidden the deep tides under,  
Croon to me, comfort me.

Wind of the night;  
Steal shadow-footed, frail,  
Wreathed darkly veil on veil,  
Lift up your taper pale  
Set all the stars alight!

Wind of the dawn!  
Under the sky's blue eaves  
Shake light in silver sheaves,  
Waken the dew-wet leaves,  
Darkness is gone!

## VII

O blind to beauty,—unconfessed,—  
Even to you I bring unguessed  
My vision, though you only know  
Softness has touched your heart,—  
Like snow.

## IDYLLE FRANCAISE

WHERE the slow stream winds by the linden  
boughs

Grave as a grey owl sits the dim old house,  
Here for a whim the two of us must dine,—  
*Salade, des escargots,* with thin red wine,  
Coffee and cheese, a sweet *tarte de Lorraine*,—  
And we could see through the bright window-pane  
The garden like a door-step paradise,—  
If God should make His heavens pocket-size!

Talk dragged; I asked; Madame she lives alone?  
You smiled; Monsieur plays Darby to her Joan;  
Forty years wed, I think you'd find them quaint;  
Madame like some aged patient kindly saint,  
Patron of housewives, saint of sauce-pans, yet  
Feminine, French, incurably coquette!

Let's have them in! We plead; at last they came,  
Monsieur decrepit, bleary-eyed and lame,  
Madame, deep-bosomed, amply broad of lap,  
All softly wrinkled under her frilled cap:

She pours the coffee, wags a gossip's tongue;  
Those days of gold, *mon Dieu*, when we were  
young!

None was *si beau, si fort* as Monsieur then!  
And now so frail, but headstrong!—ah, these men!  
He pays no heed to all her cautioning!  
Whereat he shrills; She wants to tie a string  
About my leg to keep me like her bird!  
Madame sighs, dimples, twitters on; Absurd!  
And yet my prayer is that each of us dies  
The self-same hour. She smiles into his eyes,  
Then lifts the coffee-cups and turning hides  
A bright face beautiful as any bride's.

Forty years wed . . . Close to the window-pane  
The roses blossomed fresh with the night's rain;  
Forty years wed . We two in forty years . . .  
And suddenly the roses blurred in tears.

## HADLEY MEADOWS

By Hadley elms the wide fields lie;  
Here under a New England sky  
Ringed by the blue New England hills  
Old Europe ploughs and sows and tills.

Yon barefoot daughter of the soil,  
Broad-bosomed, bending to the toil,  
Just such a stubborn grace is hers  
As Millet gave his harvesters!

Patient she spends her old-world strength  
Plodding along the furrows length,  
Then, at a cry, turns, bares her breast  
And sets her suckling babe at rest.

## THE FERRIES

### San Francisco Bay

THEY shaped us not for man's delight,  
Nor moulded us in armoured might,  
We were not planned for grace nor speed,  
But builded for a people's need.

*The white curled wavelets laugh for glee,  
Toss their heads and shout of the sea;  
Through gates of gold sifts singing wind;—  
Are we so deaf, are we so blind?*

Dull plodding shapes all day we ply  
Past where the deep-sea vessels lie,  
To and fro between our goals  
Carrying so many thousand souls.

*And think you not that we too feel  
The prick of the brine beneath the keel?  
And think you not within us stirs  
The lust of the far sea voyagers?*

Close anchored by the ferry slip,  
We pass by many a gallant ship  
Back from its wanderings over the world,  
Storm-beaten canvas folded and furled.

*What word bring you of alien strands?  
What cargoes shipped from fabled lands?  
What gossip of the seven seas?  
What loot from the Antipodes?*

Dull plodding shapes all day we ply  
Past where the deep-sea vessels lie,  
To and fro between our goals  
Carrying so many thousand souls.

## THE LISTENER

THE music will not leave your face alone,  
It shapes it as a sculptor carves his stone;  
With touches unimaginably deft,  
It frets it into haggard arcs of pain  
Then curves it back to loveliness again,  
It stops and there is only marble left.

## THE MARIONETTES

FROM your shy little curls to your prim little toes  
Lady, I love you; eyes, ears, chin and nose  
Beguile me, bewitch me. So you like the pose?  
Have you a heart? Ah, that is the riddle!  
I kneel at your feet, I plead. O fiddle!  
Your courting is crude, it lacks finesse . . .

Look at the moon, it is made of honey  
And shines for true lovers. You digress,  
The question is; have you any money?  
A handful of silver, more or less;  
What does it matter? Kiss me again,  
My heart is your own for ever and ever;  
We'll go to the priest if you'll only say when.  
The next blue moon! But you love me! Never!  
Hey, hi diddle, diddle!  
You've got it all wrong!  
Your bright sword is tin,  
Your neck is too long,  
Your legs are too thin,

And I don't like the way your hair parts in the  
middle!

So your love is a lie!

And I thought you a saint!

But no, you are nothing but pertness and paint.  
My heart is broken and I shall die.

Bell, ring his knell; ding, dong! What a jest!  
See, he lies dead, his poor heart is broken!  
It was only a plaster heart at best.  
Now draw the curtain, the piece is all spoken.

## CAPRICE

CAPRICE  
Is gold;  
An orange-colored toy balloon,  
The tinkle of a tambourine,  
Pollen that makes the brown bee bold,—

Caprice  
Is green . . .  
A hurdy-gurdy's tangled tune,  
The tassel from a jester's shoe,  
A faun's dream in mid-afternoon,

Caprice  
Is blue . . .  
Soap-bubbles blown by Pierrot,  
An errant dragonfly or two,  
Venetian lanterns hung a-row,—  
Caprice  
Is you.

## THE HOMESTEAD

THIS is my father's father's house;  
Within this dooryard each tall tree  
That yearns toward heaven with its boughs  
Roots deep within the past of me.

The rose-bush by the door is red  
With passion of strong lovers gone,  
And fragrant of dear women dead  
Who travailed that I might be born.

The low porch hung about with vines,  
The dim hearth-stone, the wide front door,  
Are precious to me as old shrines  
Because they loved them long before.

The very earth is dear;—to pass  
Down from the door-step to the street  
On flaggings rimmed about with grass  
And worn by little children's feet!

In hall and chamber, everywhere  
Are gracious presences; it seems  
Light footsteps linger on the stair,  
Soft voices haunt the rafter beams.

But closest, when at dawn I wake  
I feel those same shy gentle souls,—  
Just so, they watched the slow light break,  
Just so, they heard the orioles!

## THE LAST DESIRE

THE fields were golden when I died,  
For that was in the spring;—  
It was so hard to go away  
And leave them blossoming!

I craved a little meadow flower  
To clasp within my hand;  
They looked at me with wistful eyes  
And did not understand.

They brought me lilies for my brow  
And roses for my breast;  
They stripped great gardens bare for me  
Of all their loveliest:

Nor ever guessed,—who loved me so!—  
That what I craved might be  
A common crimson clover-top  
To take away with me.

## THE DEAD

Do they sleep, the Dead?  
Both the evil and the good  
In coffins made of cedar wood,  
Shrouded, lapped in lead?

Do they sleep, the Dead?  
Mid rusted ruin of old wars,  
Snapped swords and shattered scimitars?  
Sealed in precious perfumes, hid  
In Egypt's ageless pyramid;  
Far in some strange sun-scorched land,  
White bones bleached upon the sand;  
Or where wild waves cover them,  
Rock and roar a requiem?  
Do they sleep, the Dead?

Whether ashes, whether dust,  
Whether cased in rot or rust,  
Wrapped in white and locked with lead,  
Do they sleep, the Dead?

## UPSTAIRS

UPSTAIRS they say 'tis sunshine,  
Upstairs they say 'tis spring;  
And that means honey-locusts  
And blue flags blossoming.

They think the spring is not for us,  
Upstairs, yet even so  
A warmth has thrilled the frozen breasts  
Of us who lie below.

## THE ANGEL

ONCE it was told me by a man of God  
That close to each of us, unguessed,  
Serene of brow and radiant of breast  
The Angel of God's Presence trod.

Since then at times it seems I am aware,  
Passing perhaps along a twilight street,  
Of a faint sound like sandalled certain feet  
Which echo my own footsteps everywhere.

And once when strong fears shot their shafts at  
me

I heard a still clear silver voice which said :  
“Oh lonely child of God be comfortéd  
For where thou goest, lo I go with thee.”

## AT BETHANY

WE went in silence, save, a whisper ran  
Throughout the people: Who is then this man  
And what thing doeth he? This none did know,  
Yet still we followed. Whither do we go?  
To Lazarus. But he hath lain in shroud  
Four days and nights. A murmur shook the  
crowd.

Yet still we followed; at the burial place  
I, watching, saw upon the Master's face  
A strangeness gather,—as a light,—until  
Mine eyes went blind a space: the world was still:  
Then words of strong command smote the  
strained ear,

I saw men shudder: a great tide of fear  
Swept us at sight of that I dare not name;  
The women flickered like wind-beaten flame;  
I turned to flee, made faint with dread and awe,  
But in that moment at His side I saw,—  
As sun in storm rending the gloom thereof,—  
The face of Mary mad with joy and love!

## LIFE

LIFE bears great alabaster jars  
Of gold and purple gifts,  
Flowers, arrows, stars . . .  
Kneeling I lift  
My arms to her with pleas  
And touch  
Her knees.  
Life smiles and bends,  
The gleaming shower descends;  
Nay, I am overwhelmed by such  
Vast bounty! Cease;  
It is too much!

LASSES LOVE



## THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

I PUT my Sunday bonnet on,  
With roses 'round the brim,  
My buckled shoes, my muslin frock,—  
All for the sake of him.

I never looked about the church,  
As some I know of do!  
But quiet as a Quakeress  
Sat all the service through.

The preacher drew his text from Luke;—  
*Whom went ye out to see?*  
Old Uncle Eben took a nap  
Two seats in front of me;

The doctor's wife was dressed in silk,  
The sempstress wore her shawl;  
The way of righteousness is hard,—  
He wasn't there at all!

## THE MESSAGE

IF you should see my dear Love,—  
Now mark you how he looks!—  
Tell him the spice-bush blossoms  
Along the upland brooks;

The plum trees in the valley  
Are white, but whiter still  
Tell him the wilding cherry  
Shakes snow on Thornton Hill;

Tell him the meadow marshes  
Are brimmed with cowslip gold,—  
And mind you how he answers  
When you have told!

## THE DAISY

I ASKED a daisy of my Love  
And it was very good,  
It answered me; He loves you true!  
As I had hoped it would.

If I had let the matter rest  
Nor asked another one,  
I would have had a bit of joy  
That night to dream upon;

But though like fallen flakes of snow  
The foolish petals dot  
The meadow grass, now each declares;  
He loves me, loves me not!

## THE CALENDAR

THE first time that I saw my Love  
It was at Eastertide;  
I dreamt a dream on Whitsunday  
That I would be a bride;

Mayday he said: "My dear, my own;"—  
They tell me men deceive!—  
I gave him all my heart in June;  
Now 'tis Midsummer Eve;

So fast the summer months come on,  
So fast they slip away!  
And will he love me Hallowe'en?  
And wed me Christmas Day?

## IF I WERE A LAD

If I were a lad  
I would run away to sea,  
All to let a thousand leagues  
Lie 'twixt him and me;

And in an alien country  
Across the world from here  
I'd dwell, where none would ever speak  
Of him who was my Dear;

For oh! my heart is wrung with pain  
By that which once was sweet;—  
To hear his step at twilight  
Echo down the street!

## I LOVED IN LAUGHTER

I LOVED in laughter for a space,  
Then for a while I loved in pain;  
New fancies former moods efface;  
Now I am out of love again!

The world is wide, a happy place,  
The clouds blow by, blue skies remain;  
The winter goes and leaves no trace;  
And I—am out of love again!

FOR A CHILD



## TREE

I LAY my cheek against your bark,  
My arms along a bough,  
I pluck a little spray of you  
To bind about my brow.

I whisper secret words to you,  
You whisper back to me,  
I brush your leaves across my lips,  
Because I love you, tree.

## GOOSE-GIRL

WHITE geese and grey  
In a willow wood;  
The white geese stray,  
The grey are good.

I watch all day,  
As a goose-girl should,  
White geese and grey  
In a willow wood.

## FROM THE NURSERY WINDOW

THE Jack-o-lantern moon looks down  
Upon the treetops of the town,  
And in the branches there are shapes  
Of gnomes and dancing bears and apes;  
The elm-tree dog sits up and begs,  
The plum-tree man with crooked legs  
He lifts his cup but never drinks . . .  
The grinning moon peeps down and winks,  
The goblin in the old pear tree  
Sticks out his twisted tongue at me.

## COLUMBINES

COLUMBINES are bells  
Hung in airy steeples  
By the faerie peoples,  
Chiming pixie spells,  
Tolling elfin knells:  
Winds that set the grasses quaking,  
Start each tiny clapper shaking;  
Winds that blow the leaves a-twinkle  
Set each scarlet bloom a-tinkle  
Down the ferny dells:  
Swaying, swinging,  
Chiming, ringing,  
Columbines  
Are bells!

## THE FAIRY FROCK

It's primrose petals for a gown,  
For sempstress spiders three,  
It's gossamer and thistledown  
To make my frock for me.  
Then hie thee straight to cobbler toad  
Beneath the hornbeam tree  
Beyond the turning of the road  
To shape my shoes for me.  
Then put a dewdrop in my hair,  
Fetch me my cobweb shawl,  
And call my cricket coach and pair  
To drive me to the ball!

## THE ELF-CHILD

I sit within the chimney-nook  
And eat my cream and curds;  
I do not mind the dame's sour look,  
Nor heed her scolding words:

I never rue their bitter speech  
Nor brood upon their taunts,  
For oh! my heart is out of reach,  
Away in faerie haunts.

My heart is on the hill-side  
Where the wild thorn-apples grow,  
And overhead the skies are wide,  
And stars are warm and low:

And when their tongues in sleep are still,—  
As soft as mouse on stair,—  
I'll out and dance upon the hill  
With fireflies in my hair!

## THE MOON

THE moon's no bigger than my ball,—  
I'm not afraid of her at all!

But yesterday she rose so soon,—  
'Twas quite too early for the moon!—  
And looked at me without a sound,  
So white, so bright, so great, so round,  
Above the top of Butter Hill,  
That I was almost scared until  
She slipped behind the cherry tree;  
Out through its leaves she peeped at me,  
Then climbed up to its topmost boughs  
And crept along the neighbour's house,  
Till from the chimney by and by  
She stepped right off into the sky;  
And all the time, what do you think?  
I saw her shrink and shrink and shrink!

Now she's no bigger than my ball,—  
I'm not afraid of her at all!



FOR SOME I LOVE



## TRUANT

Do you not fear, in those long years to come,  
A day on which our voices, weary-dumb,  
Shall fail of psalms and we shall turn, replete  
Of giving praises though to praise be sweet?  
When, surfeiting of splendors, we shall be  
Burdened by jasper and chalcedony?  
Then, harps discarded, haloes laid away,  
Shall we not steal a heavenly holiday?

We two shall creep down the long shining stairs  
Softly as thieves,—old Peter unawares  
Drowsily nodding his bald saintly pate,—  
So tiptoe through a little crack i' the gate  
And out! Then unreproved, unhindered, free  
For one day of seraphic truancy!

Tell me, O Playmate, whither do we go?  
Back to dear earthly haunts we used to know?  
Or, bolder, flash through space, until afar  
We touch the threshold of some secret star?

What wild pranks shall we play, what mad deeds  
do,  
What mischief make amid strange moons, we  
two?  
Ere, meekly tapping on the sapphire door,  
We creep back to God's great gold house once  
more?

## TO ONE AWAY

For M. D. M.

If I could touch you now  
I would kiss your hair's dim bands  
And the fine faint lines of your brow  
And the faint fine veins of your hands,  
Your fingers worn and brown;  
The soft folds of your gown,  
I would touch them unawares;  
And oh, it would be sweet  
To hear upon the stairs  
The fall of your patient feet.

## THE WIND

THE wind creeps down the corridor,  
The blind wind taps upon my door,  
Pauses and sighs, then taps once more:

He lifts the latch and lets it fall,  
Then back again his slow feet crawl  
By each blank door along the hall:

And at each door he fumbles past  
He tries the latch but finds it fast,—  
He tries the little north door last.

But in that room where lately were  
Laughter and lilt he hears no stir;  
He sighs; I can't awaken her!

Then down the passageway once more  
He creeps across the creaking floor,  
Pausing to listen at my door.

## VERSES FOR A GUEST ROOM

L. S. H.

I HAVE no pomp to offer thee,  
Just my heart's hospitality,—  
A little beam, but one to light  
The lodging of an anchorite.

A slumber deep, a dreamless rest  
To thee within this room, Dear Guest!  
'Tis sweet to me that thou and I  
This night beneath one roof shall lie;  
For this I deem,—most dear, my Guest!—  
In all the world, or East or West  
Where e'er thy tarrying may be,  
Blessed is the roof that shelters thee.

## TO ANNE

GRIEF cannot ever wither you,  
Nor ill fate bitterly subdue,  
Nor, hungry heart, will you be left  
Ever quite utterly bereft;

For while dews fall and waters flow,  
While rainbows arch and west winds blow  
You cannot be quite discontent,  
For beauty is your nourishment.

TO —

THEY could not shut you out of heaven  
Although the sins you'd sinned were seven:

Not all the saints and souls in glory  
Could exile you to Purgatory:

For this is true;—they need your eyes  
To light the ways of Paradise.

TO E. A. L.

I

God dreamt a dream of stars and dew,  
Lest He forget He fashioned you.

He shaped your spirit out of these:—  
The dusk o' the dawn and the wind in the trees;  
Then with a smile He bade you be  
And made life lyrical for me.

II

There is no fear may make thy heart afraid,  
Nor doubt by which thy soul could be betrayed,  
Nor Death himself shall render thee dismayed;

For though his step be sudden thou shalt rise  
And give him greeting in right queenly wise  
With gracious lips and sweet unshadowed eyes;  
And he that is the Arbiter of All,  
Ere giving thee to drink of wine and gall,  
Shall place upon thy brow a coronal.

## APOTHEOSIS

ALL spring I watched her while a change  
Crept over her, her hands would cling  
Sharply to mine, her eyes grew strange,  
Wide with a wordless questioning;

While on her wistful face I read  
A listening look as if she heard  
From blossomed branches overhead  
The fluting of a phantom bird.

Yet breathed she never word to tell  
What wonder she was thinking of,  
Till spring's dream changed to summer's spell,  
Then spoke at last and said: I love.

## AN OLD PHOTOGRAPH

INTO your grave grey-shadowed eyes,  
So wide and innocently wise,  
I look and ask if any knew  
The wild shy gentle heart of you;  
For these same solemn eyes confess  
The child's eternal loneliness,  
The child's pathetic wistful pride,  
The child whose childhood is denied.

Could I but take your hand and touch  
Your cheek to mine and tell you such  
Brave tales as boys love to have told,—  
Of Robin Hood and pirate gold,  
Of Lancelot and Galahad;  
And when the dark came, tuck you tight  
Beneath the covers smoothed and white,  
And sing to you how angels keep  
Their slumber watch, till you should sleep,  
And sleeping, smile, O little lad!

But three score years and more have sped,  
O grave grey eyes! And you are dead.

TO A. D. M.

WHAT shall I take to make your requiem?  
Not the deep tones nor solemn hues of grief,  
Nor the sad pageant man shapes out of them,  
Rather God's beauty gathered leaf by leaf:  
Shadows of far clouds resting on the hills,  
Green dawning hope in April frond and shoot,  
Fragrance of spring woods that the rain distils,  
Orchards at sundown full of scarlet fruit;—  
Mist over moist fields brown beneath the plough,  
Great oaks in autumn bronze against the blue,  
Hips of wild rose aflame on winter's bough,—  
These will I take for these belong to you.

## THE GARDENER

SOME think  
The souls of those who die  
Linger a while among those haunts most dear  
To them in living;—a last link  
That they are slow  
To break . . .

I know  
Your spirit has been here  
Among those roses,  
Tending them with understanding touch  
And gentle wise caress;  
Else why  
Should they have bloomed this year  
In such  
Heart-rending loveliness?

## IN MEMORIAM

LIKE flying wings, like soundless waters flowing  
Fade the dear dead from out the memory;  
This is the changeless truth, Belovéd One, and  
knowing

I would pray fate these frail words prove for  
thee,—

Struck at white heat of passionate regretting,—  
Tablets of bronze, fadeless, beyond forgetting.

## HISTORICAL NOTES

THE REGICIDE—Upon the accession of Charles II in 1660, Col. Goffe and Gen. Whalley, members of Cromwell's High Court of Justice, fled to America where they spent the rest of their lives in hiding. It is known that both passed a number of years at Old Hadley concealed in the house of the minister and tradition has it that Whalley died here and was buried in the cellar. The date and place of the death of Goffe who survived him are unknown.

STEPHEN BURROUGHS DEFENDS HIMSELF—Perhaps the most picturesque incident in the career of the notorious Stephen Burroughs was his acceptance under an assumed name, on the strength of a glib tongue and a dozen of his father's old sermons, of the position of temporary minister or "Supplyer" to the dour Scotch-Presbyterian congregation of Pelham, Massachusetts. Becoming suspicious, the elders of the church demanded that he preach a sermon

extempore from a text of their own choosing, an ordeal which his quick wit enabled him to turn to his credit and their confusion.

DAN KELLOG ENTERTAINS SHAY'S ARMY—The old house with its secret staircase where Kellog hid to escape the attention of zealous patriots still stands between Amherst and Pelham. Here in 1787 after Shay's army of two thousand malcontents from Western Massachusetts had suffered their first discomfiture at the hands of the militia a number of that bold band stopped for refreshment, leaving their names scrawled on the attic walls as testimony.













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